

WHAT DOES THE WORLD THINK? A Global Lens on the U.S. Presidency

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Global Lens is a quarterly exchange of views from around the world on events that affect global security. It brings together international thought leaders to develop a multi-faceted picture of the opportunities and challenges facing the world today.

In our inaugural discussion, *Global Lens* editors Fyodor Lukyanov and Kumar Ketkar asked contributors about their recommendations and hopes for the next U.S. administration. Following is a sampling of their responses:

African Union Commission

Ethiopia

If I were to submit a request in not more than five words to a president of the United States of America this is what I would write: ‘fair trade and conflict prevention’.

The President could prioritize an emphasis on Article 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. [M]aking economic development a human rights issue feeds into the prevention of conflict and the assurance of world peace. Martin Luther King has rightly noted thus in this regard in a speech on the eve of his assassination: “Also in the human rights revolution, if something is not done and done in a hurry, to bring the colored peoples of the world out of their long years of poverty, out of their long years of hurt and neglect, the whole world is doomed.”

A pivot for this consideration would be for a U.S. president to believe Africa should be considered a fully-fledged development partner rather than a philanthropic dead-end.

EastWest Institute

United States/Belgium/Russia

The new president will need to reach across the aisle to build consensus and get significant mandates. McCain has done this in working with Democrats for many years on the Hill, and Obama was a master of across-the-aisle politics in the Illinois State Senate. Importantly, both have spoken of post-partisanship.

Vital is that the new U.S. president assume responsibilities with vision and an ability to listen

to an international community that wants to see the U.S. economically vibrant, but more humble and responsible to its concerns.

Eurasian Strategic Studies Center

Turkey

I want the next American president to focus on the values that made America a strong democracy, a creative society that seeks its golden age in the future. The new president should reclaim America's moral leadership in defending fundamental freedoms and human rights across the globe by galvanizing the international community to work together in meeting the challenges of our times. A top domestic priority should be restoring the economy because the state of health of the American economy has global impact and consequences. The new president must also review the state of education in America and upgrade its quality to meet the requirements of the 21st century. Progress in America will feed scientific and technological progress worldwide. In short, I want the American President to work for a world of cooperation, inclusion and dialogue, not conflict, exclusion and monologue.

Institute of International Relations, University of Brasilia Brazilian Center of International Relations

Brazil

The elites expect a much more responsible role of the U.S. in the governance of the global finance, climate and Human Rights.

Russia in Global Affairs

Russia

It is only a really new approach that can reverse the unfavorable trends in world development. It must provide not only for declarations of the importance of multilateralism, but also real readiness to limit America's ambitions and forgo something for the sake of agreements with influential partners.

Singapore Institute of International Affairs

Singapore

What, should we be expecting of the next person to sit in the Oval Office?

1. Rebuild Wall Street
2. Rein in American Addiction to Foreign Oil and Gas
3. Lead on Iraq
4. Restore American Credibility and Pride

Listing down the both foreign and domestic issues plaguing America, and prioritizing them will show that the next president of the United States will be expected to get the house in order before focusing on the needs of the international community. I anticipate that domestic economic policy issues will trump the foreign – at least for the foreseeable future.

Strategic Foresight Group

India

The essential question is whether McCain or Obama would be able to influence the course of events or the so-called "invisible" forces will influence their actions. In other words, how much will depend on who is elected and how much will remain unchanged irrespective of who takes charge of the White House three months from now.

While the victory of McCain could reinforce the global perception of America as a war-mongering, militarist, arrogant superpower which is out to dominate the world, on the other hand, the victory of Obama could reinforce America's long forgotten image as a nation of opportunities, liberal values and Lincolnian idea of equality of races. In that respect, these two individuals do matter, but more in symbols than in actually influencing the course of events in the world.